

**Minutes**  
**Commonwealth Competition Council**  
**Tuesday, November 14, 2006, 10 a.m.**  
**General Assembly Building,**  
**3 East Conference Room**  
**Richmond**

**Members present:**

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Chairman  
Beverly B. Davis  
Lana Ingram Digges  
Kim Y. Farrar  
Barry R. Green  
Edgardo Marquez, Vice Chairman  
Roger E. Ortega, Sr.  
Delegate Thomas Davis Rust  
David A. Von Moll  
Sara Redding Wilson  
David M. Zobel

**Members absent:**

Senator J. Brandon Bell, II  
Delegate Timothy D. Hugo  
Marian M. Pegram  
Ronald V. Shickle

Notice of the meeting appeared on the Commonwealth Calendar on the Internet. A quorum was present.

Senator Hanger presided over the meeting and extended a welcome to all present. Ms. Farrar, Deputy Secretary of Administration for Governor Kaine, was welcomed to the Council as the newest gubernatorial appointee. She reported that she had previously taken the oath of office.

**Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

The minutes of the October 4, 2006, meeting of the Council were approved as distributed.

In addition, draft minutes appear on the Internet as soon as possible but not later than ten working days following the meeting in accordance with § 2.2-3707.1 of the Code of Virginia. Final approved minutes are posted within three working days of final approval. In addition, Commonwealth Competition Council minutes are being posted in accordance with the above to the Council web page at <http://www.egovcompetition.com>.

**Think Tank Session**

Senator Hanger told the group that he wanted to have a think tank session. The Competition Council is in the unique position to do a lot of good for the Commonwealth, not only in privatization but efficiencies and effectiveness measures, and he wanted the Council to strategize on how to accomplish this. He referenced the

two most recent studies in Virginia state government, the Governor's Commission on Government Reform (Blue Ribbon Strike Force - 1994 Allen administration) and the Governor's Commission on Efficiency and Effectiveness (Wilder Commission - 2002 Warner administration).

### **Virginia Safety Rest Areas and Welcome Centers**

Since the last meeting of the Competition Council, VDOT had announced a consolidation of their maintenance shops. Senator Hanger also told the Council that he had made the recommendation to the Governor to appropriate \$20 million to partially fund renovations to the safety rest areas.

Mrs. Constance S. Sorrell, the first Chief of System Operations for the Virginia Department of Transportation, was invited to speak with the Council on Virginia safety rest areas and welcome centers. Throughout Virginia there are 41 safety rest areas, ten of which include welcome centers. Her presentation papers are attached and made a part of the minutes.

The rest areas were built in Virginia in the 1960s and early 1970s to meet future traffic demands, the purpose of which was to encourage motorists to safely and temporarily exit the roadway to reduce driver fatigue and roadside stop-related accidents. The newest original facility was built in 1993 in Carson – Prince George County on I-95 northbound. The Mecklenburg (Bracey) facility on I-85 northbound was rebuilt in 2001 and the New Kent facility on eastbound I-64 was rebuilt in 2003. The Council had expressed interest in the privatization of the welcome centers. She advised that federal regulations currently prohibit commercial establishments within interstate rights-of-way. Although the federal government has strict rules, it does allow recognition signage (such as food, gas, or lodging available at next exit or flowering plants provided by a specific company) along the interstates. No commercial advertising is otherwise permitted.

Further, she told the Council that all state agencies and institutions are required by the Code of Virginia to offer the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired first right of refusal for operating vending machines, and VDOT complies with this requirement. NOTE: DBVI is authorized to operate vending stands and other business enterprises in public and private buildings for the purpose of providing blind persons with employment, enlarging the economic opportunities of the blind, and stimulating the blind to make themselves self-supporting. Blind persons under this provision of the Code are authorized to operate vending stands and other business enterprises on any property where, in the discretion of the owner or custodian of the property, vending stands and other business enterprises may be properly and satisfactorily operated. No fee is charged to any blind person for operating a vending stand in or on any buildings, land or other property owned by or leased to the Commonwealth other than rights-of-way for interstate highways and property of community colleges; provided, however, that such blind vendors shall be responsible to the Commonwealth for the charges they incur for utilities. (§§ 51.5-78 and 51.5-79, Code of Virginia)

The average statewide daily traffic count at the rest areas/welcome centers reflect 76,000 vehicles per day with the peak number of vehicles per day of over 105,000.

The 41 safety rest areas are operated and managed as 24 hour public service facilities. They are completely outsourced with over 400 contract employee team members employed by four companies (no VDOT employees man any of these facilities). The annual management/operating costs of over \$19 million include property management contracts, minor, major and emergency repairs for grounds, parking lots, buildings, lighting, water, waste water plants, utilities, etc.

Mrs. Sorrell said that there are two current sources of funds and project pools for the capital improvement program for these facilities: fiscal year 2007 special facilities annual funding allocation (VDOT state maintenance funds) and the \$20 million General Assembly 2005 appropriation in preparation for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jamestown in 2007. There are 11 renovation projects funded with the \$20 million to include

American with Disabilities Act upgrades to improve handicapped accessibility, new restroom fixtures and plumbing, new flooring, walls, windows, doors and lighting, and new electrical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. In addition there were three facilities selected for demolition and/or reconstruction: Winchester rest area/welcome center of I-81 southbound, New Kent rest area on I-64 westbound, and the Fredericksburg rest area/welcome center on I-95 southbound.

Security provisions include the contractors hiring and retaining staff with good work ethics for 24/7 operation. State Police random visits and parking spaces designed for State Police vehicles are highly visible as further deterrents. Mrs. Sorrell spoke about the SWAM (small, women owned, and minority) vendors utilized in this initiative, and VDOT's partnership with the Department of Historic Resources in the design of the welcome centers.

When asked about deferred maintenance costs for the safety rest areas and welcome centers, Mrs. Sorrell advised the Council that there were no projected deterred maintenance costs. She said that the age of some facilities range from 35-to-40 years to the newest one built in 1993, with some rebuilt as late as 2001 and 2003. The Council also expressed interest to Mrs. Sorrell about how and what the Competition Council could do to help in cost cutting initiatives. She said she would take this back to the new VDOT Commissioner who is defining what the right balance is between the public and private sectors.

She also mentioned cell phone towers along the interstates as a possible funding source and the service they provide to cell phone users.

### **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

Senator Hanger and Mr. Marquez were unanimously re-elected as chairman and vice chairman, respectively, for the 2007 calendar year.

### **VDOT overall staffing**

At the request of Senator Hanger, the Policy Office of VDOT provided the following interim general statistics about strength at the VDOT Central Office and VDOT Districts:

- Overall, VDOT strength has been reduced by 12.5 percent since 2000
- Central Office strength has been reduced by 18.6 percent since 2000
- District strength has been reduced by 11.4 percent since 2000
- Of the total VDOT strength, 85.7 percent lies within the VDOT districts as opposed to the Central Office
- VDOT strength in October 2006 was 8,908.5, down from 10,183 in July 2000
- Central Office strength was 1,274.5 in October 2006, down from 1,566 in July 2000

### **2007 Potential Projects**

Each Council member identified potential projects that may be of interest for the Council to study during 2007, as follows:

- 1 PPEA and PPTA – oversight; review of law; streamlining process
- 2 Design Build – approval process
- 3 Elimination of social security numbers as identifier in state records

- 4 Integration of state computer systems to achieve maximum efficiencies
- 5 Outsourcing surplus auctions – heavy equipment and vehicles
- 6 Museums:
  - Service Bureaus for museums, allowing museums to focus on revenues, marketing, and fundraising
  - PPEA applicability to museums, five year comparison of dollars appropriated/expended and positions
- 7 Disparity study – how to increase the number of Small, Women Owned, and Minority (SWAM) businesses doing business with the State
- 8 Constitutional Officers – structure and satellite state functions
- 9 State – local governments (example: higher education model)
- 10 Deferred budget items – identification, funding, maintenance vs. new construction (example: VDOT rest areas deferred maintenance requirements)
- 11 Revenue generation – example: museums, rest areas (cell towers), banners
- 12 Coordination with Council on Virginia’s Future and Cost Cutting Caucus
- 13 Boards and Commissions – effectiveness
- 14 Resources for communicating “the story,” e.g. online links to Virginia efforts
- 15 Process for filling vacancies – inherently governmental positions
- 16 Authorities – effectiveness and efficiency

Mrs. Robertson will contact the members individually to determine if there are other potential projects to be added to the list for consideration. Topics will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **Next meeting**

The Council will be polled for the next meeting in January 2007.

Peggy R. Robertson  
Department of Planning and Budget